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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-WK//
TO ALCOAST
BT

UNCLAS //N05100//

ALCOAST 560/03

COMDTNOTE 5100

SUBJ: WINTER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

1. WINTER HAS ARRIVED, BRINGING WITH IT A MYRIAD OF SAFETY CONCERNS THAT CAN IMPACT BOTH OUR QUALITY OF WORK AND LIFE. BY TAKING SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS, WE CAN KEEP OUR FAMILIES SAFE AND MAINTAIN OUR FITNESS FOR DUTY. ADOPTING A SAFETY PERSPECTIVE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS CAN HELP ELIMINATE PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS AND POTENTIALLY DEADLY MISHAPS.

2. FIRE PREVENTION. IN 1999, THERE WERE 370 CHRISTMAS TREE FIRES IN HOMES, RESULTING IN 5 DEATHS, 60 INJURIES AND 16 MILLION DOLLARS DAMAGE. USING CAUTION WITH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS, PARTICULARLY WITH LIGHT STRINGS AND EXTENSION CORDS, CAN HELP TO MINIMIZE THIS THREAT. WHILE 94 PERCENT OF HOMES HAVE AT LEAST ONE SMOKE ALARM, ONE-HALF OF HOME FIRE DEATHS OCCUR IN THE 6 PERCENT OF HOMES WITH NO SMOKE ALARMS. TYPICALLY 30 PERCENT OF INSTALLED SMOKE ALARMS DO NOT WORK, MOST OFTEN DUE TO MISSING, DEAD, OR DISCONNECTED BATTERIES. ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE A MULTI-PURPOSE FIRE EXTINGUISHER, SMOKE DETECTORS AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS IN YOUR HOME, AND THAT THEY ARE IN PROPER WORKING ORDER. KEEP MATCHES AND LIGHTERS OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN.

3. FIREPLACES, WOOD STOVES AND SPACE HEATERS. IN 1999, THERE WERE 48,800 HEATING EQUIPMENT RELATED HOME FIRES IN THE UNITED STATES, RESULTING IN 301 DEATHS, 1,383 INJURIES AND 607 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROPERTY DAMAGE. TWO OUT OF EVERY THREE HOME FIRES AND FIVE OF EVERY SIX RELATED DEATHS WERE ATTRIBUTED TO SPACE HEATING EQUIPMENT. HAVE YOUR FIREPLACE AND FLUES INSPECTED AND CLEANED BY A PROFESSIONAL. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED WHEN USING ARTIFICIAL LOGS. PROTECT YOUR HOME BY USING A SCREEN WITH YOUR FIREPLACE. FOLLOW MANUFACTURERS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE AND MAINTENANCE OF STOVES AND HEATERS. NEVER LEAVE STOVES AND SPACE HEATERS UNATTENDED, AND DO NOT DRY ITEMS OF CLOTHING ON TOP OF STOVES OR HEATERS. NEVER REFUEL SPACE HEATERS INDOORS, OR USE GASOLINE IN SPACE HEATERS. KEEP A BUFFER SPACE OF 3 FEET AROUND ALL HEAT SOURCES.

4. CANDLES. DURING 1999, CANDLES IN HOMES CAUSED AN ESTIMATED 15,040 FIRES, 102 DEATHS, 1,473 INJURIES AND 278 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROPERTY DAMAGE. NEVER LEAVE A BURNING CANDLE UNATTENDED. USE A CANDLE HOLDER WITH A WIDE BASE CAPABLE OF COLLECTING CANDLE WAX AND BURN CANDLES ONLY ON A STABLE, HEAT-RESISTANT SURFACE. DONT USE A CANDLE TO CHECK THE PILOT LIGHT ON A STOVE, OR TO EXAMINE KEROSENE HEATERS OR LANTERNS. IF THE FLAME GETS TOO LARGE OR THE EXPOSED WICK IS TALLER THAN ONE-QUARTER INCH, EXTINGUISH AND TRIM. KEEP CANDLES AWAY FROM FLAMMABLE MATERIALS. EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN USING GEL CANDLES, WHICH CAN FLARE UP, SPILL, SPATTER AND EVEN EXPLODE. VISIT THE CONSUMER PRODUCTS SAFETY COMMISSION WEB SITE AT [HTTP://WWW.CPSC.GOV/CPSCPUB/PREREL/PREREL.HTML](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html) TO LOOK FOR GEL CANDLE RECALLS.

5. COOKING. IN 1999, THERE WERE 96,200 HOME STRUCTURE FIRES

ASSOCIATED WITH COOKING EQUIPMENT, RESULTING IN 331 DEATHS, 4,183 INJURIES AND 511 MILLION DOLLARS IN DIRECT PROPERTY DAMAGE. THREE IN EVERY TEN HOME FIRES STARTED IN THE KITCHEN, MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE HOME. WHEN COOKING, DO NOT WEAR LOOSE FITTING CLOTHING, WHICH MAY BE IGNITED BY HOT BURNERS. ALWAYS TURN POT HANDLES IN. DON'T STORE ITEMS ON THE STOVE TOP - THEY COULD CATCH FIRE. KEEP KITCHEN APPLIANCES CLEAN AND IN GOOD CONDITION, AND TURN THEM OFF AFTER USE. DONT USE APPLIANCES WITH FRAYED OR CRACKED WIRES. NEVER LEAVE AN OPERATING STOVE OR OVEN UNATTENDED.

6. EXTENSION CORDS. THERE WERE 38,000 REPORTED HOME ELECTRICAL FIRES IN 1998, RESULTING IN 284 DEATHS, 1,184 INJURIES AND 669 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROPERTY DAMAGE. CORDS AND PLUGS CAUSED 17 PERCENT OF THESE FIRES AND 28 PERCENT OF THESE DEATHS. ENSURE ONLY CORDS BEARING THE UNDERWRITERS LABORATORY (UL) LABEL ARE USED, AND THAT THEY ARE MARKED FOR INDOOR OR OUTDOOR USE AS INTENDED. ALWAYS INSPECT THE CORD BEFORE USE AND DISPOSE OF IT IF IT IS CRACKED OR FRAYED. ENSURE THAT THE CORD IS RATED FOR THE WATTAGE OF THE TOOL OR APPLIANCE YOU ARE CONNECTING TO IT. DO NOT PLUG ONE EXTENSION CORD INTO ANOTHER, AND DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS.

7. HYPOTHERMIA AND FROSTBITE. EXPOSURE TO A COMBINATION OF LOW TEMPERATURES, RAIN AND SNOW, AND WIND CAN INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR THESE HEALTH CONCERNS. SKIN FREEZES AT ABOUT 28 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT, AND WET SKIN LOSES 25 TIMES MORE HEAT THAN DRY SKIN. LOW BODY TEMPERATURE - 96 DEGREES OR LOWER - CAN BE FATAL IF UNTREATED. DRESS IN A MANNER THAT WILL KEEP YOU DRY AND WARM. COVER YOUR HEAD AND NECK. EAT A BALANCED DIET. ENSURE THAT YOU KEEP MOVING WHEN YOU ARE OUTSIDE.

8. SLEDDING, SKIING, SKATING AND SNOWMOBILING. WINTER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES CAN BE VERY ENJOYABLE IF ADEQUATE CAUTION IS EXERCISED. TO OBTAIN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH OF THESE ACTIVITIES, VISIT THE MLCLANT SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WEB SITE AT

[HTTP://WWW.USCG.MIL/MLCLANT/KDIV/KSEWINTERHOLIDAYTIPS.HTML](http://www.uscg.mil/mlclant/kdiv/ksewinterholidaytips.html)

9. TOYS. ASSEMBLE TOYS PER THE MANUFACTURERS INSTRUCTIONS AND READ WARNING LABELS AND OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE ALLOWING CHILDREN TO PLAY WITH TOYS. DISPOSE OF PLASTIC WRAP OR PACKAGING THAT MIGHT SUFFOCATE AN INFANT. CHECK TOYS PERIODICALLY FOR BROKEN OR TORN PARTS THAT CAN POSE HAZARDS, AND PERFORM REQUIRED MAINTENANCE. IF TOYS ARE KEPT IN A TOY CHEST, ENSURE THAT THE LID STAYS IN A LOCKED OPEN POSITION, AND TEACH CHILDREN NOT TO CLIMB INSIDE A TOY CHEST, EVEN IF IT HAS VENTS.

10. ALCOAST 500/03 PROVIDES HOLIDAY TRAFFIC SAFETY GUIDANCE THAT CAN HELP TO ENSURE YOUR DRIVING EXPERIENCE DURING THE WINTER SEASON IS SAFE AND ENJOYABLE. THE NAVY SAFETY CENTER ALSO OFFERS A USEFUL LIST OF HOLIDAY SEASON SAFETY RESOURCES AT

[HTTP://SAFETYCENTER.NAVY.MIL/SEASONAL/HOLIDAYSEASON.HTM](http://safetycenter.navy.mil/seasonal/holidayseason.htm)

11. COMMANDING OFFICERS AND OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE ARE ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH UNIT PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES.

12. COMDT (G-WKS-2) POC IS MR. ROBERT L. SKEWES, 202-267-0897.

13. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

14. RADM PAUL J. HIGGINS, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY, SENDS.

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